



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



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Governor

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DEQ Declares Ozone Action Days Through Wednesday. "CODE RED" Days Forecast

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is calling an Ozone Action Day for the remainder of today, Tuesday, July 25, and for tomorrow, Wednesday, July 26, in the Baton Rouge Area, including the parishes of East and West Baton Rouge, Ascension, Livingston, and Iberville. Both days are forecast as **"Code Red" days**. This means that increasing ozone levels may cause unhealthy air quality for the general population during the afternoon hours. Active children and adults, the elderly, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion. Everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

The ozone advisory period begins May 1 and ends September 30. The Baton Rouge metropolitan area has exceeded the federal one-hour ozone standard on four days this year: The **Baker** and **Pride** monitors recorded exceedances on May 16; the **French Settlement** monitor recorded an exceedance on July 5; the **Bayou Plaquemine** monitor recorded an exceedance on July 6; and the **French Settlement** monitor recorded another exceedance on July 15.

Ozone forms when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides react in the presence of sunlight and warm temperatures on days with little or no wind. While ozone in the earth's upper atmosphere helps protect us from the sun's harmful rays, ground-level ozone is potentially harmful to human health. Ozone is one of six criteria pollutants for which ambient air standards have been established. Louisiana currently meets federal air quality standards for all criteria pollutants in all areas of the state except East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Ascension and Livingston parishes, which have been classified as an ozone non-attainment area.

To help prevent the formation of ozone, area residents are encouraged to take one or more of the following voluntary actions:

Limit daytime driving and combine errands. Drive "emissionwise." Avoid prolonged idling and jackrabbit starts. Walk or ride a bicycle for short trips. Carpool or ride public transportation when possible.

- ◆ Refuel your vehicle in the cooler evening hours. Don't top off your tank.
- ◆ Defer mowing grass until late evening or the next day.
- ◆ Avoid use of all gasoline-powered equipment -- chain saws, garden equipment, outboard motors, off-road or other recreational vehicles. If you must use such equipment, wait until after 7 p.m.
- ◆ Postpone chores that use oil-based paints, varnishes and solvents that produce fumes.
- ◆ If you must barbecue, use an electric starter instead of starter fluid.
- ◆ Maintain your vehicle to minimize pollutant emissions and maintain fuel efficiency.
- ◆ Make certain your gas cap seals tightly. If it is missing, buy a new one.
- ◆ Conserve energy in your home.
- ◆ Spread the word by telling family, friends, co-workers and neighbors about ozone action days.

Additional information about current air quality in the Baton Rouge area is available online from the DEQ web site at http://www.deq.state.la.us/evaluation/ozone/oz_today.asp, <http://www.brcleanair.org> or by dialing 225/765-2660 for a recorded message from DEQ that provides a daily air quality reading and ozone forecast.